

# REDDING SENTINEL



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REDDING, CONNECTICUT

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\$3

## Budget work-shopping begins

By Jessie Wright

The Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance worked through the initial proposed 2026-27 budget numbers from each of the Town's municipal departments at a marathon budget workshop on Friday, January 9 at Town Hall.

From staff changes to program fees, capital expenditures to open space maintenance, almost every corner of municipal life was discussed. The workshop is one of the first major steps in formulating the Selectmen's budget, which is one part of the Town's combined budget voted on at referendum in May. (The other parts include the Redding Board of Education budget and Redding's portion of the Region 9 Board of Education budget, along with any debt service on previously issued bonds.)

For coverage of some of the items discussed at Friday's workshop, see page 3. ■



Photo by Lucía Fleming

A male cardinal strikes a pose after a New Year's snowfall. If you have a photo you'd like to see featured here, e-mail [editor@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:editor@reddingsentinel.org).

## Town receives \$100,000 Federal grant for road safety

By Donna Christopher



Photo by Jessie Wright

The intersection of Route 57, Old Mill Road, and Main Street in Georgetown.

The Town of Redding has been awarded a \$100,000 Federal grant to improve the safety of its roads and intersections.

The grant is part of more than \$6.8 million that the Connecticut congressional delegation announced on January 8 would be going to eight Connecticut traffic and road safety projects through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The funds are awarded through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets and Roads for

All (SS4A) grant program established to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The grants will support initiatives aimed at significantly improving the safety and efficiency of a town's roadways.

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton applied for the grant to help fund Redding's Comprehensive Safety Action Plan to align the Town with "Vision Zero" principles to reduce traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries. Redding's goal for its Action Plan is for a zero-fatality and zero-serious-injury roadway system. The Board of Selectmen has set a 10-year target to eliminate these incidents.

The Comprehensive Safety Action Plan will establish safety priorities to enhance Redding's roadways and include safer intersections and pedestrian crossings. Key intersections in town, such as at Route 57 and Main Street in Georgetown, will be cited in the plan. Unrelated to the grant, this intersection also was approved by the Department of Transportation for the installation of a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) in 2027, bright yellow flashing lights activated by a pedestrian push-button to alert drivers of the upcoming crosswalk.

The recently announced Federal funding will support the following other regional and local projects:

- \$280,000 to Northwest Hills COG (NHCOG) for the NHCOG Transportation Safety Action Plan
- \$280,000 to the Town of Stonington for the Comprehensive Action Plan to Improve Road Safety
- \$280,000 to the Town of Wilton for the Town of Wilton SS4A Planning and Demonstration Grant
- \$2.3 million to Capitol Region COG for the Connecticut Capitol Region Prehospital Transition Demonstration Project
- \$300,000 to the Town of Fairfield for the Town of Fairfield SS4A Demonstration Project
- \$895,200 to the Town of Westport for Planning and Demonstration Activities in Town of Westport
- \$2.4 million to the Town of Suffield to Develop a Comprehensive Action Plan for Town of Suffield ■

## REDDING'S BIG OUTDOORS

### Pond skating

By Jessie Wright



Photo by Jessie Wright

A young skater enjoyed a cleared-off area on Putnam Pond on the last day of holiday break.

This December and January were the first in recent memory when there were enough cold days in a row to warrant some good, old-fashioned pond skating over the holiday break. Families and new friends alike could be seen on Putnam Pond on frigid days, gliding over surfaces usually reserved for geese and bullfrogs.

Though things have recently thawed, the winter will likely bring more freezes to entice outdoor enthusiasts to lace up their skates. (The Park and Recreation Department also has confirmed they opted not to install the Community Center skating rink this year due to budgetary considerations, so residents may be looking for other outlets for hockey pick-up games or toe loops.)

Skating is at your own risk on any State land, as the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) only conducts ice testing for safety at one designated area (Osbornedale State Park in Derby). Ice skating is not permitted on Topstone Pond.

Before heading out on any frozen water, there are several safety considerations to keep in mind. CT DEEP provides ice safety resources and tips, including:

**Remember, ice is never 100 percent safe.** You cannot judge the strength of ice just by its appearance, age, thickness, or the temperature. Other factors, including

*Continued on page 4*

## Childhood vaccines still covered by insurance in CT, official says

By Katy Golvala

Childhood vaccines will remain covered by insurance plans despite recent recommendation changes issued by the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Interim State Insurance Commissioner Josh Hershman confirmed in a statement last week.

"Parents should be clear on this point: Childhood vaccines remain covered by insurance in Connecticut, and nothing about the CDC's recent announcement changes insurance coverage requirements for childhood vaccinations," Hershman stated. "Families should continue to obtain vaccinations in consultation with their health care providers."

On Monday, January 5, the CDC announced updates to its recommendations for childhood vaccines, which came after conducting an analysis of "how peer developed nations structure their childhood vaccination schedules" at the request of President Donald Trump. The review found that the United States "recommended more childhood vaccine doses than any peer nation" and that "countries without vaccine mandates had as high immunization rates as the U.S."

In response, the CDC issued a new, tiered recommendation, grouping childhood vaccines into three buckets: Shots recommended for all children, those recommended for certain high-risk groups, and those where decisions should be left up to "shared clinical decision-making," or conversations between people and their doctors.

As of the end of 2024, the vaccine schedule recommended 17 immunizations for all children. The updated schedule broadly recommends just 11, including polio, whooping cough, measles, mumps, rubella, and chicken pox. Among the vaccines the CDC no longer recommends for all children are flu, hepatitis A, and hepatitis B.

In a fact sheet published last week, the Federal government clarified that, despite the recommendation changes, all vaccines would continue to be available to anyone who wants them through ACA plans, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Vaccines for Children program.

"Families will not have to purchase them out of pocket. Among peer nations, the U.S. will continue to offer the most childhood vaccines for free to those who want them," stated the fact sheet.

Hershman reiterated this message to Connecticut residents on Tuesday evening.

"The vaccines referenced in the CDC announcement were not removed from the immunization schedule. Instead, they were moved from a routine recommendation to clinical decision-making recommendation," Hershman stated. "Because these vaccines remain on the CDC schedule, they continue to be covered by health insurance plans regulated by the CID."

Department of Public Health Commissioner Manisha Juthani "is solely responsible" for determining

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## Town party committees hold caucuses

The Democratic Town Committee and Republican Town Committee held caucuses last week to begin the process of electing members for a two-year term. The Committees elected the following slates of members (Note: The Democratic Town Committee list includes both full and associate members.) ■

### Democratic Town Committee

Amy Atamian	Ron Derven	Julia Pemberton
Janet August	Jeff Fligelman	Kate Perry
Jamie Barickman	Karen Gifford	Renee Pessin
Meghan Bendish	Cheryl Graziano	Phyllis Rhodes
Jeff Boxer	Laurie Heiss	Allison Rudary
Angela Caes	Sharon Hoverman	Dan Souza
Diana Carlino	Susanne Krivit	Brian Stacey
Mary Lou Carlson	Mary Dale Lancaster	Jess Tyson
Jessica Cishek	Janet Ozzard	Roger Van Ausdal
Mike D'Agostino	Mary Lee Pampel	Peggy Zamore
Gwen Denny	Chris Parkin	
Marjorie Derven	David Pattee	

### Republican Town Committee

Lewis Andrews	Brandon Harvey	Bob O'Brien
John Belfatto	Jeanine Herman	Eileen O'Brien
David Bohn	Mike Hoffman	Bria Pepe
Dwayne Boulden	Anthony Izzi	John Shaban
Noel Cooke	David Lewison	Ken Unfried
Tina Dahm	Peter Macher	Sarah Unfried
Tom Derderian	Brian Matzke	Eric Witt
Ryan Felipe	Joe Melillo	Holly Young
Joseph Fernandez	Michele Meschi	
Urs Furrer	William Miller	

## Scam aware

### Identity theft is not fiction — it's the new normal

By Anthony Freyberg

Not long ago, the phrase identity theft was met with raised eyebrows and skepticism. Today, it should be taken very seriously and prompt urgency.

Whether you've received a strange call from someone claiming to represent your bank, seen unfamiliar charges on your credit card, or discovered a loan opened in your name, the bitter truth is this: Identity theft is no longer a fringe crime. It is a persistent, pervasive threat that affects millions of Americans every year.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, identity theft reports remain among the most common consumer complaints, spanning financial fraud, medical identity theft, tax refund fraud, and synthetic identity crimes. In synthetic identity theft, criminals combine real and fake information (such as Social Security numbers and fabricated names) to create entirely new identities — a tactic that makes detection exceptionally difficult.

What makes this crime particularly insidious is that victims often only discover it after substantial harm has already been done: Credit scores ruined, loans denied, or years of financial history corrupted. Recovery is not easy. Restoring your financial

standing can take a year or more. It involves phone calls, credit freezes, disputes with creditors, and in many cases, ongoing vigilance over your financial profile.

The problem is daunting, but there are practical steps that we can take today:

- Sign up for credit monitoring and freeze your credit with the three major bureaus.
- Use multifactor authentication for financial accounts.
- Shred documents with personal information.
- Be vigilant about unsolicited digital and phone outreach.

Public institutions, private sector partners, and citizens must work together. Community organizations must redouble efforts to educate residents on protective practices. Stronger government data protections help but real resilience starts with individuals taking control of their digital footprints.

Identity theft is not a distant headline. It is today's everyday threat — and awareness is the most effective first line of defense. ■

Childhood vaccines still covered by insurance in CT, official says / continued from page 1

Connecticut's vaccine schedule, and the State's recommendations for childhood vaccines will remain unchanged, a DPH spokesperson confirmed.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, Juthani said she had "serious concerns" about the CDC's changes and said the move "risks creating confusion, placing more burden on parents and clinicians, and making preventive care harder to navigate."

Juthani also addressed the Federal government's analysis comparing the U.S. vaccination schedule to peer nations.

"Other countries' vaccine schedules reflect their own health systems and disease patterns, and

a one-size-fits-another-country approach does not reflect the realities facing children in the United States," Juthani stated.

Lawmakers have already started to discuss how Connecticut can address the uncertainty surrounding Federal vaccine policy during the upcoming legislative session.

"Yesterday's news was not surprising but absolutely shocking," Public Health Committee Co-Chair Cristin McCarthy Vahey, D-Fairfield, said. "We will likely want to decouple ourselves from that Federal guidance." ■

*This article originally appeared in CT Mirror*

## Residents rally against ICE, administration



Photos by Carol Morgan

A pop-up protest on Saturday, January 10 drew over 100 residents from Redding, Wilton, Katonah, Bethel, and Stamford to the pedestrian bridge at the intersection of Route 7 and Route 102 in Branchville. Groups represented included the Super Seniors, REBS (Redding/Easton/Bethel), and Indivisible. Signs represented a variety of political issues, including opposition to ICE, the threat of fascism, backing Ukraine, standing up for democracy, and demands to release the Epstein files. (Left) State Representative Anne Hughes joined the protestors. (Right) Young and old were part of the group that gathered before an afternoon rainstorm to protest.

## POLICE BLOTTER

### Police activity January 1 – 11 | By Donna Christopher

Police assisted in two emergency medical service calls, responded to two operators of disabled motor vehicles, and assisted three citizens.

#### Traffic

In 91 motor vehicle stops in the 11-day period, police issued two summons, one incident report, 31 infractions, 26 written warnings, 30 verbal warnings, and took no action in one case. The infraction rate was 37%.

One-car motor vehicle accidents occurred on Poverty Hollow Road and Redding Road. A two-car motor vehicle accident took place on Turney Road on January 9. There were no injuries reported in any of the three incidents.

#### Driver evades responsibility after Cross Highway crash

A misdemeanor summons was issued to a driver for evading responsibility, driving too fast for the conditions, traveling in the improper lane, and operating an unregistered motor vehicle after he hit and damaged five wire guard posts on Cross Highway on January 1. While no vehicle was found at the scene, police found a mangled license plate, which was registered to the driver.

The driver confirmed his identity to police via his passport and was provided with a court date of January 14, 2026. The license plate was beyond usability and will be returned to the Connecticut DMV.

#### Dog bite

Animal control investigated an incident on January 6 on Dahlia Lane in which a delivery driver was bitten by a dog during delivery.

#### Larceny arrest

On January 10, a 25-year-old Philadelphia resident came into the Redding Police Department to turn himself in on an active arrest warrant. The man was arrested by warrant for violation of third-degree larceny, used a bondsman to issue a \$20,000 bond set by the court, and was given a Danbury Superior Court date of January 22, 2026. He was then released. ■

## LEGAL NOTICES

A certified list of 28 Democratic party-endorsed candidates for the Town of Redding for election as Members of the Town Committee At-Large is on file in my office at 100 Hill Road, Redding, CT and copies are available for public distribution. The number of Town Committee Members to be elected, under party rules, is 40.

A Primary will be held on March 3, 2026, if 10 candidacies (which is at least 25% of the number of town committee members to be elected by such party in the municipality) are filed in accordance with §§9-382 to 9-450, inclusive, of the General Statutes, by persons other than party-endorsed candidates, not later than 4:00 p.m. of January 28, 2026, provided the number of such candidacies plus the number of endorsed candidates, exceeds the number of town committee members to be elected. (If the number of opposing candidacies filed is reduced to less than such 25%, no primary will be held.)

Petition forms, instructions, and information concerning the procedure for filing opposing candidacies may be obtained from Jessica Cishek, Democratic Registrar of Voters, 100 Hill Road, Redding, CT. ■

Michele R. Grande, Redding Town Clerk / January 8, 2026

A certified list of 28 Republican party-endorsed candidates for the Town of Redding for election as Members of the Town Committee At-Large is on file in my office at 100 Hill Road, Redding, CT and copies are available for public distribution. The number of Town Committee Members to be elected, under party rules, is 32.

A Primary will be held on March 3, 2026, if 8 candidacies (which is at least 25% of the number of town committee members to be elected by such party in the municipality) are filed in accordance with §§9-382 to 9-450, inclusive, of the General Statutes, by persons other than party-endorsed candidates, not later than 4:00 p.m. of January 28, 2026, provided the number of such candidacies plus the number of endorsed candidates, exceeds the number of town committee members to be elected. (If the number of opposing candidacies filed is reduced to less than such 25%, no primary will be held.)

Petition forms, instructions, and information concerning the procedure for filing opposing candidacies may be obtained from Michele Meschi, Republican Registrar of Voters, 100 Hill Road, Redding, CT. ■

Michele R. Grande, Redding Town Clerk / January 8, 2026

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## Police look to increase training, modernize technology with proposed budgets

By Rocco Valluzzo

A proposed operating budget of \$2,834,979 for 2026-27 represents an increase of 4.33% over the current fiscal year for the Redding Police Department.

The increase reflects a data-driven approach that prioritizes public safety, compliance with state mandates, and workforce stability, according to Chief Robert Kalamaras. The goal is to ensure the Department remains fully staffed, well-trained, technologically current, and capable of meeting the demands of a modern law enforcement agency.

Among the key drivers of the proposed budget is overtime, which is being proposed to increase to \$220,000 from \$200,000 (10%). This number covers minimum staffing requirements, training coverage, court time, and new officer on-boarding requirements and expenses. Kalamaras added that while the Department continues to seek efficiencies to reduce unnecessary overtime, some level of increase is unavoidable to maintain operational readiness and unexpected circumstances.

"Right now, a typical pay period is running around \$8,000

of overtime," said Finance Director Jim Sanders. "That fits into the range of approximately \$200,000-\$220,000 just to ensure that we do have adequate funding for overtime."

Officer training expenses are proposed to increase from \$53,000 to \$70,000 (32%). While most of the mandated training has been fulfilled in past years, discretionary training and career development for the officers is lacking significantly.

"There were not enough officers to cover patrol and present officers to training," said Kalamaras. "The officers were still burnt out from working overtime. That all seems to have calmed now that we're at a manageable staffing level."

Software costs are proposed to rise from \$45,000 to \$55,000 (22.2%) for 2026-27. This increase is needed to maintain records management and system maintenance, computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and National Crime Information Center (NCIC) connectivity, evidence tracking, body worn camera maintenance, and licensing. Kalamaras said this is not just for police but also for connecting fire department and

ambulance services.

"Right now, the system we have is functioning," he added. "It works. It's something that we really have to look out in the future. I would say there are some things, in my opinion, would be out of compliance from a criminal justice standpoint."

Redding is one of 158 municipalities in Connecticut that uses software from Nexgen Public Safety Solutions. The system creates a digital record of all activities, recognizes 911 calls, and logs the times. All the legacy information, if invested into a new product, would be moved into the new system.

"This proposal balances fiscal responsibility with the critical need to modernize training, maintain operational continuity, and support safe, effective policing in the Town of Redding," said Kalamaras. "The Department is committed to cost-control measures, and ongoing evaluation of operational efficiencies, while ensuring that officers and dispatchers have the tools, training, and support necessary to protect the community." ■

## Park and Rec proposes reductions in expenses – and revenues

By Jessie Wright

Nearly \$40,000 less in revenue for the Park and Recreation Department in the 2026-27 fiscal year would be mostly offset by reduced expenses, Director Rob Blick told the Board of Selectmen and members of the Board of Finance at the Friday, January 9 budget workshop.

To account for the lower numbers, the Department has cut back staffing levels, bringing a reduction in expenses close to in-line with the proposed revenue cuts.

One of the major drivers of costs for the Department in the 2026-27 fiscal year is the increase in Connecticut's minimum wage as of January 1, 2026 to \$16.94 and the anticipated increase next January to \$17.55.

"I did want to note that 39% of our budget is part-time staff; 66% of our total budget is staff, including our full-timers," Blick said.

There are also additional proposed expenditures to maintain some of the new recreation areas in town: A \$6,000 expense for maintaining a section of the walking path around the Community Center fields which passes through heavy brush, and \$2,500 to replenish the mulch at both the Community Center and Topstone Park playgrounds. ■

The program also has seen two

## Contracted services projected to increase at Building and Highway Departments

By Rocco Valluzzo

### Building Department

Chief Building Official Shaun Donnelly reported to the Board of Selectmen that revenue from permits for new construction, alterations, and other projects is projected at \$275,000 for the 2026-27 fiscal year, up 10% from the budgeted \$250,000 in the current fiscal year.

Activity in the Building Department over the last six months has been tracking higher than previously projected. The cost of construction in Redding in the 2024-25 fiscal year was \$24,151,000. For the last six months (July through December 2025), the cost of construction was \$17,105,000. The number of permits issued last year was 823, and in the last six months it was 430. Inspections for the 2024-25 fiscal year numbered 2,123. In the last six months, there were 963, which is similar to previous years, according to Donnelly. There were 334 certificates of occupancy and certificates of approval issued.

Contract services for both Town Hall and the Community Center show notable increases for 2026-27. Contract services for Town Hall, which cover contracts on mechanical equipment, pest control, generators, sprinklers, alarm, fire extinguishers and other expenses, are proposed to rise from \$9,200 to \$10,700 (16%), with increased pricing for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning services being the main driver. Contract services at the Community Center, which include regular service accounts on mechanical equipment along with lawn monitoring, elevator inspections, scheduled maintenance, and the addition of water systems, are proposed to increase 40% from \$16,000 to \$22,400.

The budget for new equipment (non-capital purchases) is proposed to increase 38% to \$14,500 for the purchase of a new snow blower, miscellaneous small tools, and a new truck-mounted leaf vacuum system. outfitting the Town Hall Meeting Room with new chairs and installing blinds in Town Hall add

\$6,000 to the "maintenance and repair of equipment" budget line, an increase of 69%. This is the going rate for such items, according to Finance Director Jim Sanders.

### Highway Department

Two of the largest cost drivers in the Highway Department's budget for 2026-27 are overtime and vehicle repairs. These reflect increases of 46% (\$30,900 to \$45,000) and 18% (from \$110,000 to \$130,000) respectively.

"We've had to catch up in the last couple of years with the storms that we had and the flooding that's still a thorn in our sides," said Public Works Director James Gracy, noting the August 2024 storm in particular. "So, that's why I'm looking for an increase in that overtime account, to give us a little more legroom."

Due to the age of some of the Department's vehicles, repair costs have also increased. Gracy noted one truck is now undergoing a costly repair and the Town's backhoe needs a repair from the factory.

"We've had so many big repairs this year," said. "Our equipment is getting older."

Although \$5,000 is budgeted in the current fiscal year for contract services for street snow removal, Gracy hopes to double that to \$10,000 in 2026-27. This is to meet prices for contractors who are sometimes needed after a storm, particularly to help with the sidewalks in Georgetown.

"We won't get to the sidewalks for quite a while," Gracy said. "Once we finish the roads, we do the schools. Georgetown is getting a little busier now. It's nice to see people down there and stores opening up."

First Selectwoman Julia Pemberton said the contracted trucks are mostly pick-ups with plows that do some of the smaller roads, parking lots, and train stations. The Town does not contract out for six- and 10-wheel trucks. ■

## SCHOOL'S OUT BREAK PROGRAMS

**JANUARY 19**  
**9:30-2:30**

Inspired by Martin Luther King Jr's life of service, students will engage in projects and activities around the farm that focus on supporting wildlife.

**FEBRUARY 16-19**  
**9:30-2:30**

Four days filled with Adventures! We will learn about adaptations, tracking, food webs, and more while spending time with friends exploring New Pond Farm.

**More Information:** [newpondfarm.org](http://newpondfarm.org)

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## SPORTS

### Newtown stays out of Barlow's reach

**Girls basketball** | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Sara Fenzel scored eight points for the Joel Barlow high girls varsity basketball team in its game at Newtown on Thursday, January 8.

A scoring lapse in the first half would come back to haunt the Joel Barlow High girls varsity basketball team in its game at Newtown last week.

The Falcons trailed by just two points after one quarter on Thursday, January 8. They would not score again until late in the half and could not close the gap later on in a 32-44 loss.

"If we played them again, I think it would be a close game again," said Barlow Head Coach Joel Carollo. "There's nothing we did that I think we need to fix."

Both sides relied heavily on the three-point shot early in the action, with each side sinking four in the opening frame. Leading the way for Barlow, Page Jarvis hit three, her last tying things at 14-14 later in the quarter. The Nighthawks would reclaim the lead with Ana Morris's shot down low as the hosts led 14-16.

While in good position entering the next frame, the Falcons had their offense go cold for nearly eight minutes, shooting less than ten percent. Defensively, they did not fare badly, holding the Nighthawks to a mere seven points.

"We got cold in that quarter," said Carollo. "We just missed some layups, missed some shots."

It was not until 10 seconds remained in the half when Barlow finally found the basket again, coming on a shot by Mia Tartaglia as the visitors trailed 16-23 at half-time.

Despite missing a number of shots, the Falcons did better offensively in the third frame and stayed within 10 points of the hosts. With

Tartaglia and Sara Fenzel each hitting three-pointers, they kept pace while trailing 24-31.

On a couple of occasions, the Falcons drew within six of catching the hosts, thanks to shots by Tartaglia and Fenzel, the latter's trey making it 30-36. But as was the case earlier in the night, the Falcons missed on several attempts.

Sam Diaspro's sixth three-pointer of the night put Newtown up 30-41. The Falcons' last points came with 2:08 left on a shot by Ava Gillon and Newtown finalized things at 32-44.

Jarvis led Barlow with nine points, all on three-pointers. Fenzel was next with eight (two three-pointers), and Tartaglia sank six with one three-pointer. Gwen Miller had five points (one three-pointer), and Gillon finished with four.

"Everyone who played worked hard," said Carollo. "Mia worked her butt off and got some rebounds. As a guard, that's hard to do sometimes."

Barlow, now 4-3, visits Weston on Thursday, January 15 at 7:00 p.m., hosts New Fairfield on Friday, January 16 at 6:00 p.m., and is home to Bunnell on Tuesday, January 20 at 6:00 p.m. ■

### Shamrocks defense holds off Knights

**Hockey** | By Rocco Valluzzo



Photo by Rocco Valluzzo

Goalie Max Durrwachter makes a save during a Joel Barlow High/Weston/Abbott Tech (JBWA) hockey game against the Northeastern Shamrocks on Saturday, January 10.

There would be no second attempt at a comeback for the Joel Barlow High/West/Abbott Tech (JBWA) hockey team in its game against the Northeastern Shamrocks last weekend.

While the Knights trailed their opponent by two goals later in the first period, they clawed their way back, tying things up later in the frame on Saturday, January 10. But when their opponent gained the upper hand a second time, the hosts had no answer, coming up short 2-5 at the Danbury Arena.

Both sides jockeyed for position at the start, exchanging shots early

in the first period only to come up empty. That would change with 9:39 left in the period when the Shamrocks struck first, coming on a goal by Brayden Cunningham with Brayden Kelly assisting to put their team up 0-1.

Barlow responded with a couple of shots that were denied by Shamrock goalie Kian Kelsey until the visitors struck again. About five minutes remained when Joe Marchese put them up 0-2 with Jayden Cunningham getting the assist.

Plenty of time remained for the Knights to get back into the game,

which they did. Cross checking and high sticking calls against the Shamrocks put them down a couple of players and with a minute left, Chris Nesto gathered Dean Melnyk's shot off the post and sent it into the goal on the power play to cut the lead to 1-2.

Not even 20 seconds later the Knights scored again, this time when Wes Arees found the goal with Joe Nigro assisting to tie things at 2-2 as the first period ended.

The momentum the Knights had gained at the end of the first period did not hold up when play resumed, however, and they were unable to score again. Getting called for cross checking put them down a player with eight minutes left, and the Shamrocks' Owen Rembisch sent a shot into the upper right corner past Knight goalie Max Durrwachter to make it 2-3. The visitors later killed off a roughing penalty and continued to lead by a goal going into the last period.

It turned out to be a physical one, with the Knights getting called for four penalties, the first two helping the Shamrocks find the net on the power play. One minute and 16 seconds into the frame, they scored again on a goal by Marchese. With 7:02 left to play, Tom Walker found the net as the Shamrocks put things out of reach for the hosts.

JBWA, now 1-3-1, visits Amity of Woodbridge on Monday, January 19 at 4:00 p.m. ■

**Redding's Big Outdoors: Pond skating** / continued from page 1

water depth, size of the water body, water chemistry, currents, and local weather conditions, all impact ice strength.

**New ice is usually stronger than old ice.** Four inches of clear, newly-formed ice may support one person, while a foot or more of old, partially-thawed ice may not.

**Ice seldom freezes uniformly.** It may be a foot thick in one location and only an inch or two just a few feet away. Continue to check the conditions as you move around on the ice.

**Ice formed over flowing water and currents is often dangerous.**

This is especially true near streams, bridges, and culverts. Also, the ice on outside river bends, and inlets and outlets of lakes and ponds is usually weaker due to the undermining effects of the faster current.

**The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process.** The extra weight also reduces how much weight the ice sheet can support. Ice near shore can be weaker than ice that is farther out.

**Booming and cracking ice isn't necessarily dangerous.** It only means that the ice is expanding and contracting as the temperature changes. ■

General ice thickness guidelines are for new, clear (blue) ice on lakes and ponds. White ice or "snow ice" is only about half as strong as new clear ice. Anything under four inches – STAY OFF. Four inches or more – ice fishing, skating, or other activities on foot. Five to seven inches – snowmobile or ATV. (Note: It is illegal to drive a car or truck on the ice in Connecticut.) ■

For more information, visit [portal.ct.gov/deep/outdoor-recreation/ice-safety](http://portal.ct.gov/deep/outdoor-recreation/ice-safety)

### Falcons take to the slopes

**Downhill skiing** | By Rocco Valluzzo

Between a snowstorm the day after Christmas and freezing temperatures that followed, the Joel Barlow High ski teams kicked off the season on schedule last week.

Conditions were still favorable at Mount Southington for the Falcons' first race on Thursday, January 8. There was also plenty of competition to be found, as the boys team took seventh out of 12 teams with a time of 359.77, just 0.12 seconds behind St. Luke's of New Canaan.

Barlow had two skiers in the top 20, getting back-to-back finishes in the process. A combined 53.75 put Sam Walker 13th, just 0.03 seconds after Wilton's Theo Satrazemis. Matt Luca was next with a 54.04 for 14th.

While a little further back in the field, Barlow's next two finishers also placed consecutively, starting with Grayson Lapine in 26th with 55.71, just 0.01 seconds after New Canaan's James Bakal. Right behind him was Barrett Commissio in 56.06.

Next was Bryce Hopkins in 64.35, taking 72nd in 64.34. ■

Completing the scoring for the Falcons, Gabriel Koegel was 93rd with a 75.87.

The girls race also featured some tough competition. With a 379.68, Barlow placed tenth out of 12.

Cracking the top 30 places proved difficult. Barlow came close with Eliska Beksa finishing with a 55.77, taking 32nd overall. She was one of two Barlow skiers in the top 40, the other being Katherine Stowell in 38th with a 56.88, 0.02 seconds after Greenwich Academy's Eugenia Cocke.

With a 59.72, Haley Watson was 54th overall. It was a close call for 89th, with Cheshire's Emma Oakes just touching out Barlow's Elizabeth Kimball. Both had times of 66.13.

Next for Barlow was Holly Landa, who took 94th in 67.26. Also scoring for Barlow was Bluet Collins, who was 121st in 73.92.

Barlow returns to Mount Southington for a race on Thursday, January 22 at 4:40 p.m. ■

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### Barlow scores four sportsmanship awards

By Rocco Valluzzo

Four Joel Barlow High sports teams received awards for their sportsmanship during the 2025 fall season.

The varsity football and field hockey teams both received the sportsmanship award from the South-West Conference (SWC). These awards highlight the league's commitment to fostering a positive, respectful, and honorable athletic environment at member schools.

With a 6-4 overall record, the football team finished fourth out of 12 teams in the league standings for the season and 10th in state Class SS rankings, narrowly missing a playoff berth.

The field hockey team finished with a 6-6-2 record, qualifying for the league tournament and securing a spot in the state Class S tournament, reaching the quarterfinals.

In addition, the boys and girls varsity soccer teams won sportsmanship awards from the Western Connecticut High School Soccer Officials Association (WCSOA) with the former receiving the Robert Sterling Award. Girls soccer, which finished at 7-4-2, received the Ted Alex Award, qualifying for the SWC tournament and reaching the second round of the state Class M tournament. ■

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# Redding students make Dean's List at WCSU and SCSU

By Jessie Wright



Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) and Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) have announced their Fall 2025 Dean's Lists, with four Redding students between the two schools recognized for their academic achievements.

At WCSU, Dean's List recognition is awarded each semester to

Tim Pilyugin (Sport and Wellness Management) were named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List.

At SCSU, full-time undergraduate students enrolled in a degree program must earn at least 12 credits and achieve a semester grade-point-average of 3.5 or higher to be eligible for the Dean's List. Part-time undergraduate students enrolled in a degree program must earn at least 12 credits overall in the fall and spring semester and achieve a grade-point-average of 3.5 or higher in each semester to be eligible. Nicole Spinelli met these requirements for Fall 2025. ■

## Students and teachers weigh in on Barlow's new cell phone policy

By Melanie Schrade

*Editor's Note: The following article was first published in the December 2025 **Talon Tribune**, Joel Barlow High School's student-run newspaper. For the 2025-26 school year Joel Barlow High School implemented a universal cell phone policy for the first time. Students are allowed to bring cell phones and wearable technology to school, but devices must be turned off or on silent and kept out of sight during class, advisory, in academic centers, and at the library. Students are not allowed to take their cell phones when visiting the restroom. Cell phone use is permitted in non-instructional spaces such as the cafeteria during lunch and study hall, in the auditorium during lunch, before or after school, and during community minutes.*

With the new school year came a new cell phone policy for Barlow. Now, after having adjusted to it, how does Barlow feel about it? While students don't seem to enjoy it, teachers do, and administrators believe that it is the solution that Barlow has been waiting for.

Mr. Kellogg explained in an interview that the new cell phone policy was long overdue. With some students who "average 40 hours a week on TikTok" alone, the policy was intended to keep Barlow, first and foremost, a learning space; students who want to spend time on their phone would then do so at home. He noted that research shows many students just aren't ready to manage their screen time yet, and the policy is supposed to help them be more productive.

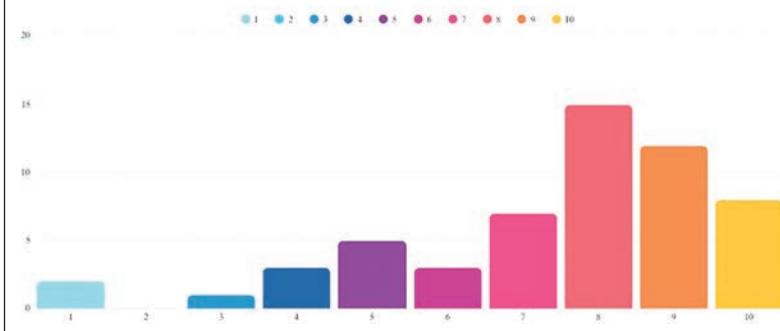
Mr. Kellogg compared phones to the smoking areas that used to exist in Barlow: "We know it's bad," and with that knowledge comes a responsibility to help students become the best versions of themselves here at Barlow, but allowing phones would inhibit that.

When asked what he saw in the

### Teacher Results

"To what extent do you believe the new cell phone policy has impacted student engagement in your classes?"

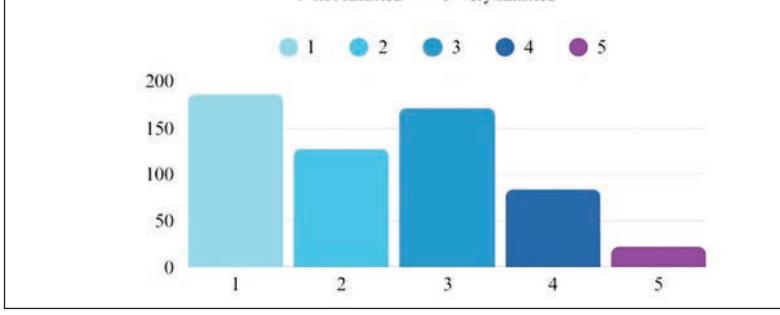
1 - no impact → 10 - significantly increased engagement



### Student Results

"Please rate your overall satisfaction with the new cell phone policy"

1 - not satisfied → 5 - very satisfied



future for the policy, he predicted that it would only get stricter.

### What do teachers think?

Feedback from a recent survey sent out to teachers was mostly positive. Most issues with the policy revolved around difficulties enforcing it and the constant reminders being given. One anonymous teacher explained, "Sometimes it is more rational to use the cell phone (upload homework, contact a partner who is out, etc.) than to have them put them away, and it makes me feel authoritarian to have them not use them when I think it may help their learning. It is harder for the upperclassmen to follow the policy, as many of them seem to

feel grandfathered in."

Other feedback received from teachers was to be more consistent across the board, but most were appreciative of the new policy, and in favor of it.

### What do the students think?

The results of the recent cell phone policy survey that was sent out to students found that the student body was mostly dissatisfied. One anonymous student feels that "it is a disservice for both teachers and students for not being allowed to use phones, rather than encouraging a healthy relationship in using them." Most student comments asked for the policy to be made less strict, especially in the library. ■

## MUSIC NOTE

## From downward dog to Dawg jams

By Pamela Brown



The Station Dawgs: Dave Lowenadler, Stuart Friedman, Dennis Dominick, Matt Weber, and Ross James

A group of yoga practitioners work out at a wellness studio and start a conversation. Sounds like the beginning of a joke, but it's actually how a new local band was formed.

"The Yoga Station is more than just yoga – it's a place to be a part of a community," said David Lowenadler who connected with Ross James, Stuart Friedman, Dennis Dominick, and Matt Weber at the local yoga and wellness center on Brookside Road. It wasn't long before the quintet talked music.

"One day in class, Whitney [Coccaro, the owner of Yoga Station] said it would be great if

she could have live music at one of her events, and it just so happened that me, Matt, and Dennis said, 'We got it.' We had a rehearsal at The Granite and I dragged along my bandmate Ross, and a few months later, Stuart joined up with us and Station Dawgs was formed."

The band performs "Dawg" music, a genre created by David Grisman, a mandolinist, which blends bluegrass, folk, and jazz. "We typically play the music of Bob Dylan, The Band, and Jerry Garcia, so we're a folky-bluesy-jam band," said Lowenadler, who sings lead vocals and plays the mandolin. James plays guitar and

## When it's cold outside, mitigate these risks inside Winter fire and gas hazards

By Donna Christopher

January's frigid temperatures can make the coldest month of the year even riskier indoors. With fireplaces burning, home cooking happening more frequently, and back-up generators running during winter storms, carbon monoxide and other gas hazards grow. Homes using propane or natural gas for heating or cooking also require extra vigilance for leaks.

Steve Santa, Assistant Chief of the Georgetown Volunteer Fire Department and an expert in the propane industry who works for a family business Santa Energy Corporation, shared advice on preventing gas and carbon monoxide leaks. He stressed that as families spend more time indoors and rely heavily on heating, cooking, and fuel-powered appliances, safety planning becomes essential.

Home heating systems need regular servicing, and carbon monoxide detectors need to be installed and maintained. It's up to homeowners to have a propane or natural gas service company. "It's very important," Santa said.

Residents who have gas appliances need distinct detectors: A carbon monoxide (CO) detector for the poisonous byproduct and a fuel gas detector for leaks of natural gas or propane, as CO detectors don't detect fuel gas leaks, and you need separate alarms for explosions and poisoning.

You need a CO detector on every level of your home and near sleeping areas, while fuel gas detectors should be near appliances like furnaces, water heaters, and stoves, Santa said.

"Every home should have carbon monoxide detectors around any appliances that might be burning, whether they have oil or gas. If it's a burning appliance, they should have a carbon monoxide detector, because carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless, you may not even know that it's in the house. And of course it can kill you," Santa said.

While Connecticut requires CO detectors in most homes, there is not yet a universal, enacted law for fuel gas detectors in all buildings. Legislation (H.B. 6848) has been proposed to mandate them in new and existing structures that use combustible gases.

Santa noted only a small, possibly 50, number of homes in Georgetown have natural gas, while homeowners in Redding are more likely to have propane with their own tanks, which is more common in rural, spread-out areas of Connecticut that are less likely to have access to natural gas lines. Natural gas infrastructure typically follows denser population centers such as Danbury, Santa said.

For those few that do use natural gas, a natural gas detector near your stove provides early warning

for dangerous methane leaks, preventing explosions by sounding alarms at unsafe concentrations, with models available as plug-in or hardwired units, often combining features like CO detection. Propane-fed appliances should have a propane detector near them.

Natural gas and propane detectors are different, because the gases have different densities, requiring specific sensor calibration and placement, with natural gas (lighter) needing high placement (near ceiling) and propane (heavier) needing low placement (near floor). Many modern detectors can detect both, so always check the label for the proper installation location.

For emergency gas leak calls, the fire department will go out to the home and check for leaks with a flammable gas detector to try to identify the source if there is a leak.

Proper maintenance of a home's smoke detectors also is an important way to minimize danger should there be a fire in a home.

Santa urges homeowners to replace old carbon dioxide (CO2) detectors if needed. "They usually stop working after 10 years," he said. "We get calls from people saying they're chirping and go out and find they don't work any longer."

### Exit/Meeting place

Having a household emergency exit plan is essential. Families should talk in advance about how everyone will get out of the home quickly if there's a gas leak or fire. That means knowing which doors and windows to use.

Exit pathways should always be kept clear and orderly. Do not store boxes, furniture, or other items near doors, stairways, or windows that may be needed in an emergency. Clutter can slow an escape and increase the risk of injury, especially at night.

Homes with second floors should have more than one way out. If there is only one stairway, consider an alternate escape option, such as a portable emergency ladder that can be deployed from a window. This is especially important for older adults or anyone with limited mobility.

Once outside, families should have a designated meeting place a safe distance from the home so everyone can be accounted for quickly. This prevents confusion and helps first responders know whether anyone is still inside.

In winter conditions, people should also think ahead about staying warm after evacuating. If possible, sheltering briefly in a vehicle, going to a neighbor's home, or using emergency shelter resources such as the Red Cross coordinated by first responders may be necessary, particularly during overnight evacuations. ■

that all can enjoy. We're glad to have them play here during our special events. They played for our holiday party this year and everyone loved it."

This is a side gig for the band members. Lowenadler is a building inspector; James is a school teacher in New Canaan; Dominick is a union plumber and a private drum instructor; Friedman works in the financial industry; and Weber is a musician and a skilled luthier. Vast musical backgrounds unite these bandmates. A Bethel native, Lowenadler became interested in

Continued on page 7

## BOOK REVIEW

### Shadow Ticket | By Thomas Pynchon

304 Pages / Penguin Hardcover / \$15.27

*Shadow Ticket*, the newest novel by Thomas Pynchon, is a cannon-blast of places, names, and situations. The story hangs on these, though it doesn't really matter. What dominates in reading Pynchon is his artist's account of existence. A host of existential observations from the author, and asides from strangers and minor characters, make a reader coming to him for the first time feel that the ground his characters walk upon is unsafe and delusional. They live in a novel simmering with events and uneasy paranoia. Thomas Pynchon's world.

*Shadow Ticket* is a 1930s story of a putative "cheese princess" from Milwaukee named Daphne. At the behest of her father, she is pursued by a private detective when she follows her musician boyfriend to Budapest. Her father is known locally as "the Al Capone of Cheese." Because the author is Thomas Pynchon, we note that "cheese" is slang for money. Her father is a Big Cheese. But Pynchon's main character is his style, and everything story is secondary, or implicit and more or less beside the point. Pynchon's novel depicts zeitgeist, and recalls poet Clive James's comment that knowing a plot exists in Proust [a French novelist reputed to be difficult] affects your understanding like learning that space is curved. Art has an unlimited canvas. Narrative presentation represents choice; Pynchon's fealty is to art — creation over destruction, light over shadow.

Pynchon is 81-years-old. His new novel, *Shadow Ticket*, keeps his place as a supporting beam in American literature, but he exists at

some distance from center. He sustains his reputation as a writer/artist but, as with some lauded modern fine artists, Pynchon's style is not for everyone, and draws criticism for difficulty.

In reading Thomas Pynchon over the years, each book brings an experience not unlike eating alphabet soup with a fork: you know it is lettered, but you sometimes feel you can't get the nutrient. Gore Vidal commented that it takes nearly as much energy to read *Gravity's Rainbow* (winner National Book Award, 1973), as it must have taken the author to write it. Is reading *Shadow Ticket* worth the effort? Yes. And here is why.

"A passing smile, in which any note of cordiality would be hard to locate." It is not that these sentences or phrases are difficult to read or understand. Rather, context presents questions to probe for answers. It is a human smile? How much of history should be accessed for comprehension? Is it a Nazi smile? Pynchon's writing requires an extra unit of effort on the part of the reader, akin to translating a foreign language by sounding each word, for practice and comprehension. It has always been so with Pynchon. The more you bring to the effort, the more you will benefit.

What Pynchon seems to be saying in all his work is that reality is never what you were given to believe it is. People constantly talk trash. Or they make accurate observations and interpret them wrongly. Or they don't know what they are talking about. Or their conclusions are wrong or misleading.

*Continued on page 7*

## LIBRARY CORNER

### Read this winter, win a prize | By Erin Shea Dummeyer

Next time you find yourself at Mark Twain Library, stop in and try our Adult Winter Reading Raffle! All you have to do is check out a book, audiobook, or magazine and you'll receive a scratch-off ticket that could win you a small prize. Your ticket will then be entered to win the Grand Prize cozy winter basket at the end of the month. In honor of winter books, here are a few favorites from our staff:

*The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon — In this work of historical fiction, Martha Ballard, an 18th-century midwife, investigates a murder. The author based the story off the real life diaries of Ballard.

*Rock Paper Scissors* by Alice Feeney — Adam and Amelia Wright take a 10-year anniversary trip to Scotland. Adam suffers from face

blindness, which makes it difficult for him to recognize friends and family members. For fans of suspense, this domestic thriller won't let you down.

*Kristin Lavransdatter* by Sigrid Undset — This gripping saga of 14th-century Norway is a trilogy that follows the life of the titular protagonist. Undset won the Nobel Prize in Literature for this work in 1928. It's a saga, but it's satisfying.

*The Sittaford Mystery* by Agatha Christie — On a snowy winter evening in England, Mrs. Willett and her daughter host a seance with four friends. A spirit announces that their landlord Captain Trevelyan has been murdered, so one of the guests leaves to inspect. This is a wintery whodunit in classic Christie fashion.

*Winter Garden* by Kristin Hannah — It feels like everyone read her book *The Women* last year, so 2026 is the perfect time to pick up one of her earlier books. In this dual-timeline novel, two sisters learn the truth of their mother's life in Leningrad during World War II.

*Winter* by Val McDermid — The bestselling novelist McDermid dives into creative nonfiction with this short celebration of winter. She describes Edinburgh in winter, takes readers on a stroll through Bonfire Night on the Scottish coast, and revisits winter traditions of her childhood. This is hygge in a book. ■

Erin Shea Dummeyer is Director, Mark Twain Library

## Good books for good readers

By Margi Esten

Why read the classics? Italian writer Italo Calvino defined classics as "books which, the more we know them through hearsay, the more original, unexpected, and innovative we find them when we actually read them." Harriet Sanders, Publisher of Macmillan Collectors' Library, believes that a classic "has to have endured and stood the test of time... they will deal with themes that are still relevant today — universal themes." I continue to revisit this topic, and so here are a few "classics" to consider reading or re-reading this year:

*Little Women* by Louisa May

Alcott is set amidst the Civil War with four sisters — Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy — growing up in a household filled with love, struggle, and ambition. Each sister faces her own journey toward adulthood.

*Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë introduces us to one of fiction's most memorable protagonists. This is an enduring love story full of passion, mystery, tragedy, with a very strong-willed and beloved heroine, Jane Eyre.

*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë features one of the most romantic and passionate couples in literature. This haunting Gothic

romance, with its depiction of destructive love, is one of the great novels of the 19th century.

*Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert is an 1856 novel about being trapped in a loveless marriage. It remains one of the best, and saddest, portraits of a woman ever written. It faced obscenity charges when it was originally published but is now considered a masterpiece.

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley is a Gothic classic raising profound questions about humanity, responsibility, and the boundaries of scientific exploration. ■

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# Redding marks the finish line for two runners' statewide challenge

**The 169 Towns Society** | By Justin Reynolds

Connecticut is the third smallest state in the Union, ahead of only Delaware and Rhode Island. But for the members of the Run 169 Towns Society, the Constitution State can feel much bigger.

Founded in March 2012, the volunteer-led Run 169 Towns Society is a group of runners aiming to complete public races in — you guessed it — each of Connecticut's 169 towns.

The challenge recently brought several members to Redding, where they passed the major milestone.

"The idea of running in all 169 towns has been around for a long time," said Adam Osmond, one of the group's eight co-founders, who lives in Farmington. "Rik Villarreal has been doing this since the 1970s, but it was never an organized effort."

Over the years, Osmond and his co-founders kept bumping into each other at races, and they eventually decided to create a formal organization.

"In order for a race to count, it has to be an official, timed race, and you only get credit for the town where the race starts, not for how many towns it goes through," Osmond continued. "Almost all of the races are for a good cause to raise funds, and we're glad to help out."

According to Osmond, people join the Society for two main reasons: They like to run, and they want to explore the entire state.

In November, Berlin resident John Senia achieved that goal, finishing his 169th race after completing The Joyce Allen Memorial Great Turkey Escape 5K in Redding. He was one of two Society members to accomplish the feat that day; two other 169ers also checked off their final town in Redding in December after completing the Joel Barlow High School Reindeer Run, including Dawn Shaw, who lives in Simsbury.

"Several other 169ers said the Redding Thanksgiving race is one of the best races around, so this



Photo by Jessie Wright

Members of the Society posed together before running The Joyce Allen Memorial Great Turkey Escape in Redding in November.

one lined up perfectly as my last race," Senia said. "The weather was cool and sunny — perfect for running. The race organizers provided plenty of awesome swag and food before and after the race. The organizers also recognized the 169 finishers with special turkey hats. I couldn't have asked for a better race and town to finish in."

After completing his first marathon a few years ago, Senia learned about the Run 169 Towns Society from a neighbor and signed up the next day.

Though Senia enjoyed his time in Redding, his most memorable race came earlier in Simsbury.

"I came across a mama bear and her cubs just off the trail," he said. "She was more afraid of the runners, and I just kept on running."

Shaw learned about the Society when she saw someone wearing a Run 169 headband at a race and looked it up afterward.

"I decided to join because there are few adult recreation options that offer this level of flexibility, and I wanted to rebuild a community of athletic, like-minded friends," she said.

It took her a little less than two years to race in all 169 towns.

"My experience in Redding was wonderful," Shaw said. "We were welcomed into the high school on a chilly morning, which was much

appreciated. The students knew it was my final race, made me a bib with number 169, and cheered enthusiastically the entire time, which made the day special."

Currently, the Society boasts 5,775 members from all 169 towns in Connecticut, including eight from Redding.

"We have members in their 80s and kids as young as five," Osmond said. "We even had a 10-year-old girl and 12-year-old boy, who, with their parents, completed running in all 169 towns."

"Run 169 is an inclusive community, welcoming folks of all paces and backgrounds," Shaw said. "You don't need prior race experience, and there's no concern about being too slow. Everyone shares the same goal of completing the challenge, and there's a strong culture of encouragement and support."

For those who complete all 169 towns, the journey doesn't have to end.

"The 169 adventure doesn't end after completing it," Senia said. "Several people go around multiple times. I started my second round the first week of December. It gives people an opportunity to try different races and continue to meet new people." ■

For more information, visit [tinyurl.com/run169](http://tinyurl.com/run169) to watch a 90-second synopsis on the Society or [run169towns.org](http://run169towns.org) to sign up for free

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## Notes from a neighbor

### My weights problem

By Carter Wiseman

The thing I like least about New Year's is the resolutions, especially about physical fitness. They provide too many opportunities for virtue signaling, such as public displays of Downward Dog, and the imposition of guilt among those of us who prefer upward stance.

The oppressive climate of compulsive conditioning is made worse by the flurry of fitness articles in the media. Not a week goes by when the New York Times doesn't run a piece on how to trim one's abs or tighten one's tush in a matter of minutes using only a kitchen table for support.

This campaign is not for me. Mind you, I developed some shoulder pain a few years back, and a physical therapist suggested that I lift a one-pound barbell ten times in the shower every morning. Pain gone! I was so encouraged that I invested in resistance bands in hopes of recovering my college oarsman's profile, but was disappointed. A neighbor with a degree in physical education suggested that I up my one-pounders to three-pounders, and gave me a list of exercises: curls, crunches, and squats. I have the weights and her written instructions on a stool in the bathroom. Between the barbells

and the resistance bands, I have enough equipment to save me a membership at the local Y, but now that the shoulder pain is gone, I like to think of them as more inspirational than instructive.

I am comforted in admiring the gear rather than using it by a number of dodges. One is that I may have spent a day in New York City, and burned enough physical and emotional calories avoiding delivery drivers on e-bikes to give me a pass on my home workout. Another is having helped a friend move into a new apartment, even though I now tend to supervise such activities, leaving the heavy lifting to the next generation. Negotiating the parking lots at our local supermarkets is more than enough to give my neck the workout that might be included in any coach's stretching routine.

Fitness fans will accuse me of ducking my responsibility for my health. Even though I have never smoked, and agree that sitting is the new smoking, I am not quite ready to invest in a Lululemon workout wardrobe. I am, however, ready to commit to considering a resolution to address this issue at the stroke of midnight next December 31. ■

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Music Note: From downward dog to Dawg jams /  
continued from page 5

music at a young age when he started playing the guitar. He was a bass singer in choirs and barbershop arrangements. "Later in life, I found love in playing the mandolin. Several years ago, I met up for a very informal front porch-style jam session, which led to the formation of many band arrangements," he said.

James has been involved in the local music scene for the past seven years. A trumpet player turned self-taught guitarist who has played music off-and-on in various bands since his teenage years, James cultivated a long-standing love of jazz and improvisational music. Through his musical partnership with Lowenadler, James has helped form several other active local bands, including Grooved Pavement, Thin Men, and the Ross and Dave Duo.

Friedman is self-taught, playing music since his early teens. His specialty was drums but he expanded into playing guitar, bass, and piano and now focuses on the keyboard. In addition to composing and recording his own original music utilizing keyboards and modular synthesizers, Friedman plays piano and B3 organ in numerous local projects.

Playing drums since age 13, Dominick has performed with

various bands in New York City and the Tri-state area for over 25 years. Currently he plays with local singer songwriter Brian Matzke and his band Session Flo along with The Dropouts. He also frequently participates in the open jams at Sugar Hollow Taproom.

Playing music since age 12, Weber earned a Master of Music degree from the Juilliard School where he also served as an instructor for talented young musicians. He's the former associate principal bassist of the Karlovsky Vary Symphony Orchestra, former principal pool member of the Czech National Symphony Orchestra, and a core member of the North Czech Capella. As a bassist, Weber has performed with numerous orchestras, philharmonics, and ensembles, working under noted conductors, composers, and artists.

Station Dawgs hope to branch out from their roots at The Yoga Station to perform at other local events. "We would love to move forward in the future and we're in contact with local venues, but have nothing on the books," said Lowenadler. "Music definitely brings people together. It brought us together, and people come see us and everyone has fun." ■



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Book Review: *Shadow Ticket* / continued from page 6

Pynchon affirms a large and powerful universe — and you are a small and near non-entity. Life is a speculation. Forging your own identity, though necessary, will not necessarily guarantee meaning and purpose. What works for someone else probably won't work for you. One size, manifestly, does not fit all. Fear is justified. Be afraid. In fact, Pynchon might be modernity's preeminent Chicken Little, another way of saying *artful voice of nihilism*. This book is (metaphorically) your howling testimony of implicit outrage and complaint.

And, so what is the reading experience with Thomas Pynchon's latest novel, *Shadow Ticket*? His prose is atmospheric. In one way or another, entropy dominates. Comedy grows in the spaces between reality and delusion. Pynchon's books are an intellectual playing field to contemplate human affairs. But the grounds are quicksand. His prose can seem tortured. The point of his style is to represent life in its chaos, and to ferret out meaning and purpose with premise. There are no solutions offered. His writing highlights inaccuracies we are

brought up to, and it stands against the tyranny of ignorance and nonsensical theories of life. In fact, the last, summary chapter of *Shadow Ticket* makes a definitive statement, and to some extent also summarizes Pynchon: "You said you were taking me back to the United States." "We are. And then again, we're not." "It's the U.S. but not exactly the one you left." ■

Review by Tom Casey,  
author of *Human Error*,  
*Strangers' Gate*, and  
*Unsettled States*

# THE NATURAL WORLD

## If trees could talk *Inner beauty*

By Janice Rotchstein

Over the holidays, I heard a poignant story with a very happy ending.

It's about a family who lost a dear friend: one who was there through all seasons, at birthday parties and graduations, during the marriage of their youngest and for the burial of Scruffy, a 10-year-old Norfolk terrier.

Now it may seem strange at first, but the loss of their majestic White Oak was devastating. That was, until the parents read they could recycle the wood into beautiful multi-grained serving boards. Each would be a special gift filled with memories for their kids, grandchildren, and friends.

More and more, people are reclaiming dead or fallen trees to create decorative keepsakes, live-edge dining room tables, rustic outdoor benches, even whimsical pet sculptures.

What's even better, the artisans responsible for such magical transformations can make the process easy. They come to your home, assess the tree, brainstorm what can be designed, and set to work.

"It all starts with the first cut," said Eric Tougas of Tougas Timber-



Photo courtesy of Tougas Timberworks  
Sugar Maple kitchen countertop

works. "That's when a tree's inner beauty is revealed: its unique color, grain, and character. From there, we decide what to create."

Hardwoods are the best to use, including oaks, maples, chestnuts, sycamores, and hickories. Each offers versatility with durability. But softwoods like pines or spruces can also work: It's all in the drying, planing, sanding, carving, and staining.

Tougas, who believes in sustainability, defines his designs as "tree to product." His portfolio features

kitchen and bathroom countertops, culinary islands, cribs, stairwell steps, fireplace mantles, shelving, and even cutting boards.

Like Tougas, Sergio Atanasoft has a way with nature. A former construction worker, he left the trade after injuring his back to found In the Spirit of Wood. Today, he uses a chainsaw and chiseling tools to produce personalized sculptures from tree trunks.

There's the 12-foot lighthouse sculpted on a client's lakefront property. A life-sized Labrador



Photo courtesy of Tougas Timberworks  
White Oak serving boards



Photo courtesy of In the Spirit of Wood  
White Oak serving boards

retriever whose smile reminds its owner of cherished greetings. The mermaid lounging by a family's pool.

Atanasoft goes to one's home, scales a trunk – up to 10 feet – and in usually a week, is finished with a commission.

Should you suddenly feel you'd like to try your hand at wood sculpting, Atanasoft offers carving classes through his Georgetown Wire Mill artist studio. "People arrive in the morning and leave with a bear by end of day," he

volunteered. "Women are actually better at wielding a chainsaw than most men; they use more finesse."

So, the next time you lose a tree, be creative. Turn the loss into new memories, gifts, or a remodeling project. Collaborate with a craftsman and let your imagination go wild. ■

*Learn about the artisans featured at tougastimberworks.com and inthespiritofwood.com*

*Have a story or tree to suggest for this column? E-mail reddingtree-conservancy@gmail.com*

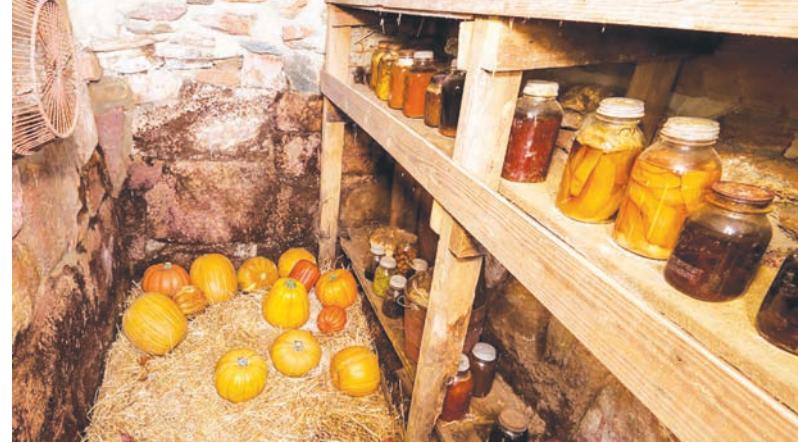
## REMEMBERING REDDING

### From farm to table in the 19th century

By Bruce Nelson



Traditional mincemeat



Root cellars were essential for maximizing the harvest



One of Redding's cider mills in the 1840s

A few years ago, I was approached and asked to contribute a few historical New England recipes to the upcoming local cookbook. I was more than hesitant. After all, the book was supposed to encourage chefs to produce interesting and flavorful cuisine. But anyone who has ever seen a collection of early 19th-century recipes will soon realize that food preparation 150 years ago was much different than it is today. Most early recipes either dealt with the preservation of various food products or with taking previously preserved meats and vegetables and rendering them more palatable when they were eventually prepared for consumption. Dining in the 19th century was more about sustenance than the creation of nutritious and delicious meals. With very few exceptions, 19th-century recipes produced dishes that most 21st-century Americans would not voluntarily choose to eat.

One example that comes to mind and something that is still occasionally made today is mincemeat pie. Only today's mincemeat is nothing like it was 150 or even 50 years ago. Today's version is sweeter and is used for making a pie that is typically served as a dessert. The modern recipe still includes a mixture of currants, raisins, sugar, apples, candied citrus peel, spices, and suet. But 150 years ago, it was served as a main course, and it had one rather important additional ingredient that is missing in most mincemeat recipes of today. Meat!

In the 19th century, mincemeat was the product of the preservation of whatever animal protein that was chosen (beef, mutton, wild game).

It required neither heat to produce nor refrigeration to keep. Once the mincemeat was prepared, it could be stored for months and then baked in a pie crust and served as a complete meal. While somewhat akin to a shepherd's pie, mincemeat filling had no fresh ingredients; it could have been stored for months before it was served. My grandmother's recipe replaced the mutton with venison. It was certainly a lot more savory than sweet. Right up until the year she passed, she would send my father two jars of this mixture every November. My dad loved it – the rest of us tried it once and thought that was enough.

So rather than entertaining the reader of that upcoming cookbook with dishes that most folks living in the 21st century would likely not enjoy, for my contribution, I decided to write the book's foreword. It would explore a little of the history of local agriculture and the types and varieties of the crops our ancestors chose to cultivate, as opposed to providing detailed descriptions of the kinds of cooking recipes we would have found recorded in our two-times great grandmother's handwriting.

Early Redding farmers planted crops and raised livestock mostly for their own consumption. A few of the larger farms produced more than they could use, and the excess farm production was usually bartered between neighbors or sold to area stores for credits that could be applied towards purchasing products that a farmer couldn't grow for himself, examples being sugar, coffee, salt, molasses, and assorted spices. A farmer who raised hogs

might barter bacon and salted pork for a steady supply of eggs and milk from another farmer who had multiple cows and chickens. Many farmers bartered with local millers for the grinding of their wheat and corn into flour by giving the miller extra portions of their crops rather than cash.

Mid-19th century agricultural censuses for the Town of Redding give us a clear and accurate picture of what our ancestors would have produced on their farms. Potatoes and corn saw the greatest numbers of acres planted. The reasons are obvious. Potatoes kept well for many months when stored in the cool root cellars found in every rural New England home prior to the introduction of artificial refrigeration. Corn kernels could be dried and then rehydrated when they were ready to be consumed. Corn was also used as livestock feed or ground by local millers for flour and cornmeal. Corn syrup was a cooking staple that every farmer's wife used. Wheat, barley, and rye also consumed many acres of local farmland. Grains played heavily in feeding the livestock but were also used to produce flour needed for baking.

Not surprisingly, almost every local farm had an apple orchard. Like potatoes, apples stored well and could be kept for up to a year if they remained undamaged and cool. Apple cider was either consumed fresh during the autumn or allowed to ferment to produce a hard cider that was later consumed as an alcoholic beverage. Apple cider that was fermented for a longer period became vinegar; a vital ingredient used in the pickling process that

would preserve summer vegetables for use during the winter.

Honey and maple syrup were produced on many of the larger farms. In addition to being a tasty sweetener, both products were used in the preservation of unrefrigerated meats such as bacon. The bees that produced the honey were also essential in the pollination process of flowering fruit trees and vegetables. Maple trees were plentiful and syrup production, while time consuming, came during the early spring before the fields were tilled and the new crops planted. Both honey and maple syrup kept for months with no need for refrigeration.

Every local farmer would have cultivated a substantial vegetable garden that yielded different varieties of fresh produce from May until late September or early October. Root vegetables such as onions, garlic, carrots, yams, and radishes stored well. And some of them added valuable flavors to preserved meat when it was eventually cooked and consumed.

Vine vegetables such as tomatoes, green beans, cucumbers, peas, and squash provided their growers with a fresh and delicious alternative to the usual fare of preserved foods that had supplied substance, if not natural flavors, over the previous winter. Each of those vegetables was savored as they were harvested, and those that weren't immediately consumed went through the process of preservation either through pickling or canning – the "canned" vegetables usually being put up in sealed "Mason" jars after 1860.

Preserving meat was even more

difficult than dealing with fruits and vegetables. It was a time consuming and painstaking process. Do it wrong, and you lost a valuable animal that had taken months to raise and feed. Smoking the meat was not only a popular method of preservation, but one that added a flavor that the meat would retain until it was consumed. Salting was also frequently used to draw the moisture out of the meat so that it would keep for months on end. The issue with salted meat was in rehydrating it and adding enough spices and cooked vegetables to overcome the taste of the salt residue that remained in the cut. Slow cooking meat mixed with vegetables in a large stew pot for hours not only added flavor but rehydrated the meat to make it more tender.

Most of the recipes used and handed down during the 19th century involved the process of preservation. Without refrigeration, meat and vegetables required labor intensive methods of pickling, smoking, salting, or brining that would preserve their nutritious qualities over the many months they wouldn't have otherwise been available for consumption.

Today, foods from near and far are readily available at our local markets. So, as we think of the many holiday meals we've just enjoyed, let us remember just how lucky we are that we don't have to plan as many months ahead as our ancestors once did just to survive. ■

Bruce Nelson is Co-Historian for the Town of Redding and Co-Founder of the Redding, CT History Project

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

\$ = fee applies  
R = registration required

## This Week's Featured Events

### History Submerged: Protecting Connecticut's Irreplaceable Landscapes

**Thursday, January 15**

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
Hosted by Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton and Mark Twain Library  
Dinner, games, fun  
Mark Twain Library  
439 Redding Road  
marktwainlibrary.org

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### Artist Networking Night

**Thursday, January 22**

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Meet new collaborators and explore resources for artists  
Anonymous Society  
268 Simpaug Turnpike  
anonymoussocietyart.com

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### Karaoke Night

**Friday, January 23**

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.  
Grades K-6  
Redding Community Center  
37 Lonetown Road  
reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation

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### Want to feature an upcoming event?

E-mail us at [advertise@reddingsentinel.org](mailto:advertise@reddingsentinel.org) for more information.

## ARTS

**Thursday, January 15**

### The Royal Ballet: Romeo & Juliet

1:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Stream on HD screen

Heritage Center

37 Lonetown Road

RSVP to [mpilato@reddingct.gov](mailto:mpilato@reddingct.gov)

or (203) 938-9725

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Wednesday, January 21

### Old Time Jam

7:30 p.m.

Play or sit back and listen to Appalachian music

The Granite

5 North Main Street

[thegranitechurch.org](http://thegranitechurch.org)

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Thursday, January 22

### Artist Networking Night

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Meet new collaborators and explore resources for artists

Anonymous Society

268 Simpaug Turnpike

[anonymoussocietyart.com](http://anonymoussocietyart.com)

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Thursday, January 22

### Bluegrass Nights

7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

House band at 8:00 p.m.

with open jamming

The Granite

5 North Main Street

[thegranitechurch.org](http://thegranitechurch.org)

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Saturday, January 24

### Winter Warmer with Charlotte Roth and the Big Drama and Kira McSpice

6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

The Granite

5 North Main Street

[thegranitechurch.org](http://thegranitechurch.org)

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Wednesday, January 28

### Winter Songwriter Circles

7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

The Granite

5 North Main Street

[thegranitechurch.org](http://thegranitechurch.org)

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## CHILDREN | TEENS

**Friday, January 16 –**

**Saturday, January 17**

### Frozen Jr.

7:00 p.m. Friday

2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Saturday

Bethel High School Auditorium

300 Whittlesey Drive

Bethel

[ticketpeak.co/bethelparkandrec](http://ticketpeak.co/bethelparkandrec)

\$

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Friday, January 23

### Karaoke Night

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Grades K-6

Redding Community Center

37 Lonetown Road

[reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation](http://reddingct.gov/parks-and-recreation)

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Sunday, January 25

### STEM Sundays (Grades K-4)

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

New Pond Farm Education Center

101 Marchant Road

[newpondfarm.org](http://newpondfarm.org)

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## ARTS

### Friday, January 30

#### Teen Takeover at The Granite

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Presented by Boys & Girls Club of Redding-Easton, enjoy pizza, live music from JRMS band, and more  
The Granite  
5 North Main Street  
[bgcre.net](http://bgcre.net)

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## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

### Mondays – Fridays

#### The Breakfast Club

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Ongoing meetings, every weekday

Christ Church Episcopal

184 Cross Highway

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# #1 WHERE IT MATTERS MOST

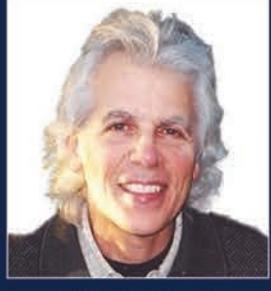
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1. Based on total closed units information from SmartMLS for all price ranges as reported on 01/12/2026 for period of 01/01/2025 - 11/30/2025. 2. Data based on closed and recorded buyer for all price ranges in Redding as reported on 01/12/2026 for period of 01/01/2025- 11/30/2025. The property information herein is derived from various sources that may include, but not be limited to, county records and the Multiple Listing Service, and it may include approximations. Although the information is believed to be accurate, it is not warranted and you should not rely upon it without personal verification. Affiliated real estate agents are independent contractor sales associates, not employees. ©2026 Coldwell Banker. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker and the Coldwell Banker logo are trademarks of Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. The Coldwell Banker® System is comprised of company owned offices which are owned by a subsidiary of Anywhere Advisors LLC and franchised offices which are independently owned and operated. The Coldwell Banker System fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act.

